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Committee for Programme and Coordination
Fifty-sixth session
31 May-24 June 2016
Agenda item 7
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifty-sixth session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Aleg **Yermalovich** (Belarus)

Addendum

Proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019
(*Item 3 (b) (ii)*)

Programme 1
General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management

1. At its 11th meeting, on 6 June 2016, the Committee considered programme 1, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019 (A/71/6 (Prog. 1)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the proposed strategic framework, contained in conference room paper E/AC.51/2016/CRP.1/Rev.1.

2. The Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management introduced the programme and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the programme.

Discussion

3. Delegations expressed general support for the overall objectives of the programme and acknowledged the importance of services provided to Member States by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. It was noted that the Department was the largest in terms of staffing.

4. Appreciation was expressed for the progress achieved in the efficient use of resources, the harmonization and integration of global conference management services, the implementation of standardized rules and procedures and the use of

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modern information and communications technologies at the four duty stations (Geneva, Nairobi, New York and Vienna) in improving the quality and efficiency of conference services.

5. It was recognized that the services provided by the Department had an impact on the work of Member States, and it was emphasized that those services should continue to be available to Member States when meetings were under way. Some delegations noted the need to ensure the availability, for example, from the Documents Assistance Centre, of documents in time for meetings and the printing of documentation, such as e-resolutions, on demand so as to limit the waste of paper and foster a greener Organization in the future.

6. Concern was expressed about the need for improved availability of modern information and communications technology, for example, for Wi-Fi printing, and for Member States when voting was required, and about whether there were any plans to address the issue in the future.

7. It was recalled that in its resolutions on multilingualism, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to ensure that all language services were given equal treatment. It was emphasized that the principles of multilingualism in the United Nations should be fully implemented, and appreciation was expressed that the principle of multilingualism was upheld at offices away from Headquarters. The appointment of the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management as Coordinator for Multilingualism, in compliance with resolution 69/250, was welcomed, and clarification was sought as to whether all programmes had taken multilingualism into account in their proposed strategic frameworks and as to what obstacles had been encountered.

8. Clarification was also sought on measures being taken to improve services at conference centres at different duty stations, such as at the regional commissions, on how the overall performance of conference services at those locations compared with that at Geneva, Nairobi, New York and Vienna, and on how that performance was measured. In addition, it was observed that the strategic framework presented did not include the conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Clarification was sought as to why that was the case, since information on utilization pertaining to ECA was, conversely, included in the report of the Committee on Conferences submitted to the Fifth Committee for its consideration.

9. Delegations noted that several indicators of achievement in the programme targeted 100 per cent satisfaction with the services of the Department. Questions were raised as to how the achievement of those indicators would be measured, what remedial action would be taken should a target not be reached and what financial and staffing resources were available for the implementation of related activities and to ensure that the quality of conference services provided did not decline.

10. Questions were raised as to whether the Department had any role in the oversight of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, and how that was reflected in the strategic framework.

11. Questions were raised as to when the Department planned to implement standards of quality assurance for contractual translation. Clarification was sought on the memorandums of understanding between universities and the Organization with regard to the training of interpreters, translators and editors in all the official languages. In particular, questions were raised regarding what languages and

professions were covered, the impact of the programme, including on the success rate in competitive language examinations and on the degree of satisfaction expressed by language staff.

12. With regard to indicator of achievement (a) (i) of subprogramme 4, Meetings and publishing services, it was noted that the target of zero complaints by representatives of Member States was an ambitious one, and clarification was sought as to whether there had been any complaints during the previous biennium.

13. Clarification was also sought regarding meetings held outside United Nations premises and how they were reflected in the strategic framework, in particular where the activities were not fully in the interests of all Member States.

14. Delegations stressed the importance of the use of technology in facilitating the intergovernmental decision-making processes and emphasized the need for the Department and the Office of Information and Communications Technology to continue to assist with the use of information technology tools to facilitate the work of Member States in all duty stations.

Conclusions and recommendations

15. **The Committee emphasized the need for the Secretary-General to ensure that all duty stations continued to provide high-quality conference services to Member States.**

16. **The Committee noted the usefulness of information on conference management and utilization and emphasized the need for the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to continue to share with all duty stations and United Nations conference centres at regional commissions, at their request, best practices and lessons learned, to enable them to continue to provide high-quality conference services.**

17. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 1, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019, subject to the following modifications:**

A. Conference management, New York

Subprogramme 1
General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs

Objective of the Organization

Replace "To improve" with "To facilitate".

Subprogramme 2
Planning and coordination of conference services

Objective of the Organization

Replace "To improve" with "To facilitate".

Subprogramme 3
Documentation services

Objective of the Organization

Replace "To improve" with "To facilitate".

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

Expected accomplishment (a)

Replace the existing text with "Efficient and cost-effective conference servicing supporting multilingual deliberations with high-quality referencing, editing, translation, précis-writing and text-processing of parliamentary documentation and other written materials, ensuring the equal treatment of all official languages".

Add an expected accomplishment (b), as follows: "(b) Improved effectiveness of the continued outreach efforts to expand the pool of freelance translation and editorial staff".

Indicators of achievement

Add an indicator of achievement (b) (i), as follows: "(i) Expansion of the freelance staff roster in all languages and disciplines by at least 15 per cent".

Add an indicator of achievement (b) (ii), as follows: "(ii) Resorting to contractual translation where that mode of delivery yields a final product that is of comparable quality to translation done in-house".

Add an indicator of achievement (b) (iii), as follows: "(iii) Reduced imbalances across language combinations".

Strategy

Paragraph 1.9

Add a subparagraph (m), as follows: "(m) The Department will continue to work and collaborate with the Office of Information and Communications Technology to facilitate, through the use of information and communications technology, the efficient and effective deliberation of intergovernmental bodies."

Subprogramme 4
Meetings and publishing services

Objective of the Organization

Replace "To improve" with "To facilitate".

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

Add an expected accomplishment (b), as follows: "(b) Improved effectiveness of the continued outreach efforts to expand the pool of freelance interpretation and verbatim staff".

Indicators of achievement

Add an indicator of achievement (b) (i), as follows: "(i) Expansion of the freelance staff roster in all languages and disciplines by at least 15 per cent".

Add an indicator of achievement (b) (ii), as follows: "(ii) Reduced imbalances across language combinations".

Strategy

Paragraph 1.10

After "meetings services", insert "and through sustained support for training opportunities geared to expanding and upgrading staff members' skills".

Replace the existing text of subparagraph (h) with "Implementation of sustainable best practices for both meetings and publishing services at all duty stations, including implementation of relevant international standards for environmentally responsible management and expansion of the use of electronic tools and processes in conference-servicing operations in a sustainable and paper-smart manner. The Department will continue to offer paper-smart services as additional support to delegations."

Add a new subparagraph (l), as follows: "(l) The Department will continue to work and collaborate with the Office of Information and Communications Technology to facilitate, through the use of information and communications technology, the efficient and effective deliberation of intergovernmental bodies."

B. Conference management, Geneva

Subprogramme 3
Documentation services

Paragraph 1.12

Add a new subparagraph (l), as follows: "(l) The Department will continue to work and collaborate with the Office of Information and Communications Technology to facilitate, through the use of information and communications technology, the efficient and effective deliberation of intergovernmental bodies."

Subprogramme 4
Meetings and publishing services

Strategy

Paragraph 1.13

Replace the existing text of subparagraph (h) with "Implementation of sustainable best practices for both meetings and publishing services at all duty stations, including implementation of relevant international standards for environmentally responsible management and expansion of the use of electronic tools and processes in conference-servicing operations in a sustainable and paper-smart manner. The Department will continue to offer paper-smart services as additional support to delegations.".

Add a new subparagraph (l), as follows: "(l) the Department will continue to work and collaborate with the Office of Information and Communications Technology to facilitate, through the use of information and communications technology, the efficient and effective deliberation of intergovernmental bodies."

C. Conference management, Vienna

Subprogramme 3
Documentation services

Paragraph 1.15

Add a new subparagraph (l), as follows: "(l) The Department will continue to work and collaborate with the Office of Information and Communications Technology to facilitate, through the use of information and communications technology, the efficient and effective deliberation of intergovernmental bodies."

Subprogramme 4
Meetings and publishing services

Objective of the Organization

Replace "To improve" with "To facilitate".

Strategy

Paragraph 1.16

Replace the existing text of subparagraph (h) with "Implementation of sustainable best practices for both meetings and publishing services at all duty stations, including implementation of relevant international standards for environmentally responsible management and expansion of the use of electronic tools and processes in conference-servicing operations in a sustainable and paper-smart manner. The Department will continue to offer paper-smart services as additional support to delegations."

Add a new subparagraph (l), as follows: "(l) The Department will continue to work and collaborate with the Office of Information and Communications Technology to facilitate, through the use of information and communications technology, the efficient and effective deliberation of intergovernmental bodies."

D. Conference management, Nairobi

Subprogramme 2
Planning and coordination of conference services

Objective of the Organization

Replace "To improve" with "To facilitate".

Subprogramme 3
Documentation services

Objective of the Organization

Replace "To improve" with "To facilitate".

Strategy

Paragraph 1.18

Insert a new subparagraph (l), as follows: "(l) The Department will continue to work and collaborate with the Office of Information and Communications Technology to facilitate, through the use of information and communications technology, the efficient and effective deliberation of intergovernmental bodies."

Subprogramme 4
Meetings and publishing services

Objective of the Organization

Replace "To improve" with "To facilitate".

Strategy

Paragraph 1.19

Replace the existing text of subparagraph (h) with "Implementation of sustainable best practices for both meetings and publishing services at all duty stations, including implementation of relevant international standards for environmentally responsible management and expansion of the use of electronic tools and processes in conference-servicing operations in a sustainable and paper-smart manner. The Department will continue to offer paper-smart services as additional support to delegations.".

Insert a new subparagraph (l), as follows: "(l) The Department will continue to work and collaborate with the Office of Information and Communications Technology to facilitate, through the use of information and communications technology, the efficient and effective deliberation of intergovernmental bodies."

Legislative mandates

Relevant articles of the Charter of the United Nations

General Assembly resolutions

Add "69/250 Pattern of conferences"

Add "69/262 Questions relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015"

Add "70/255 Progress towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat"